

Nandikeśvarakāśikā

Māheśvarāni sūtrāni, tantric connections.

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Abbreviations:

- A - the manuscript of Nandikeśvarakāśikā 553-4;
- B - the manuscript of Nandikeśvarakāśikā 553-5;
- V - the edition of Nandikeśvarakāśikā by H.C. Vedantatirtha.

Introduction

Nandikeśvarakāśikā (also called Ādisūtrakāśikā, Ādisūtrakārikā, Nandikeśvarakārikā) is a unique and distinctive text ascribed to Nandikeśvara (dates unknown). Its uniqueness is at least partly attributable to the ways in which it describes series of causal links and relationships between the Sanskrit alphabet and stages of cosmic emanation. These stages, described in the text, as a graduated unfoldment of categories of existence (*tattvas*), are synchronised with the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet as these have been represented in the well-known *Māheśvarāni sūtrāni* of Pāṇini's Ashtādhyāyī (app. 500 BC)¹, a foundational Sanskrit grammar text. The *Māheśvarāni sūtrāni*, as we may know, group the alphabet into fourteen distinct units of vowels and consonants based on their specific and internal consistencies. The Nandikeśvarakāśikā (NK), remarkably, conjoins this unique sequence of phonological letter-groups with a parallel emanation of sequential *tattvas*, or categories that are also here significantly grouped into units. Perhaps, the intriguing feature of the cosmic model or paradigm presented in the Nandikeśvarakāśikā is a series of complex causal correlations between the Sanskrit phonological groups and *tattvas* which are recognized here as emanating or originating from the former into existence.

Traditionally, the *Māheśvarāni sūtrāni* have been imbued with metaphysical connotations specifically in the context of their sound-symbolism and association with *śabdabrahman* or Word. However, such a sacred dimension to the letters in the Pāṇinian sūtras has not been explicated or developed into a full-scale cosmogony in any known texts prior to NK. Therefore, we find here a quite early and distinctive usage of a 'grammarians' alphabet-system as a means of concrete manifestation of the cosmos. Moreover, by establishing such links between the *sūtras* and cosmogony, Nandikeśvara seems to have also created new links between the Sanskrit grammar of Pāṇini and Śaiva Agama traditions.

In this paper, I present an edition together with English translation of Nandikeśvarakāśikā in its distinct recession. This is a shorter version of this unique and historically valuable text. I will try to give an outline of the available to me research data regarding NK's date and place. The text has a historical value because traditionally it is considered to be an earliest text describing phonic cosmology.² But not only that, it is linked to the traditional grammatical elements. I also intend to explore the specific ways in which the author, Nandikeśvara, has represented relationships between the Pāṇinian groups of letters and groups of *tattvas*. I will try to show how these groups of letters are creative cosmic principles, presided over by specific deities, and the ways in which they serve to bring specific levels of existence into being. It is my notion that the author may have viewed the *Māheśvara sūtras*, which are groups of letters, as creative agencies, because these agencies in fact are themselves groups, pairs, or triads that represent inherent aspects such as formless and form, consciousness and power, will and knowledge, sovereignty or lordship and multiplicity, etc. Instead of singularity, this text explores the universe as fundamentally inter-relational.

Place and Date of Nanadikeśvarakāśikā

There seems to be much ambiguity and uncertainty with regards to the history of Nanadikeśvarakāśikā as a text. We do know that Nandikeśvara is a name attributed to various authors who wrote on a range of subjects. A grammarian called Nandikeśvara is mentioned by *Kṣīrasvāmin* in his commentary on *Amarakośa* and by Sayana in *Dhatuvivṛtti*.³ In the canon of *Jayadrathayāmala*, a summary of which has been presented by Dyckowski,⁴ Nandinātha is an author of *Krodhānalasaṁhitā*. However, one may not conclude from this that the Nandinātha of *Jayadrathayāmala* is the author of NK.

As a name, Nandinātha, or Nandikeśvara, or simply Nandī, has several associations: a deity associated with Śiva, a celestial being, a sage or a legendary teacher who passed on various branches of Śaiva teachings. There are in fact several texts where Nandī is mentioned as a legendary teacher. For instance, we know that Nandikeśvara is purported to be the deity who once transmitted the knowledge of *Gandharvatantra* on earth.⁵ According to *Brahmayāmalatantra*, Nandī was the source who first revealed the knowledge of Raurava agama.⁶ Also, Nandinātha is mentioned in the canon of Śaiva Siddhanta as a recipient of Raurava agama from the Tatpuruṣa face of Sadāśiva.⁷ However, it is unlikely that these legendary authors could be identical with our Nandikeśvara for several reasons not the least of which is the fact that the style and the views reflected in NK are quite unique in themselves. Besides this, it is apparent that most of the traditional canons reflected in the mentioned above *tantras* and *āgamas* have little clear historical value.

At first glance, it may seem strange to note that perhaps our most reliable sources of information about the actual history of the text may be some of the Śaiva myths reflected in NK. For example, we know that there are specific myths associating Śiva, or Maheśvara, in the form of Naṭarāja with a long-standing grammatical tradition in Sanskrit literature. This form of Śiva is purported to have delivered the Sanskrit alphabet to the world through the *śiva sūtras*. The earliest instance of the myth of Pāṇini receiving *akṣarasamāmnāya* from Maheśvara occurs in the versified *Pāṇinīyaśikṣā*, a text on phonetics, attributed to Pāṇini himself.⁸ Moreover, in the commentary of Upamanyu we find it noted that sages Nandikeśvara and Patañjali also witnessed Śiva's dance. Relying on this description, K.C. Pandey concludes that Nandikeśvara was a contemporary of Patañjali. He adheres to a traditional view that Nandikeśvara was a contemporary of both Pāṇini and Patañjali.⁹ However, we know that Pāṇini's contemporaneity with Patañjali is considered to be historically improbable by most scholars. Furthermore, the narrative of the dance witnesses may be seen as a kind of rhetorical device for giving equal weight to the above mentioned teachers (*acaryas*) rather bearing any kinship to historical facts. However, it is interesting that Pandey suggests another 'evidence' that NK was known to Patañjali. This is the occurrence of the word *brahmarāśi* in Mahābhāṣya (1.36) and Kaiyata glossing the word as *brahmatattva*. Following Nāgeśa Baṭṭa, Pandey concludes that Patañjali hinted at Nandikeśvara's *brahmatattva* or *brahmarūpa* (in the other recession) in the fourteenth verse. However, this evidence seems to be insufficient to prove that Patañjali based himself on Nandikeśvara and not the other way around.

It is perhaps significant that the traditional body of literature of Sanskrit grammarians reveals little awareness of NK till much later in its development. It

seems that most grammarians preferred to remain either indifferent or were unaware of any connection between Śiva and the *sūtras* till the time of Haradatta, a South Indian commentator of *Kāśikāvṛtti*.¹⁰ It is also significant that Haradatta did not quote the verse directly from *Pāṇinīyaśikṣā*, but from a compilation of traditional verses of wisdom.¹¹ The verse then appears as cited by Srilankan Dharmakīrti in his *Rūpāvatāra*. Deshpande concludes from several fragments of such evidence that the story of Pāṇini receiving *sūtras* from Maheśvara was probably wide spread in southern parts of the Indian subcontinent in the 10th century.¹² However, none of the writers who mentioned the famed Śiva-Pāṇini myth in their works actually referred themselves to NK. It is in fact only Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, in his *Laghuśabdenduśekhara*, who actually notes that Śiva himself offered the *sūtras*. Nāgeśa may have done this on the basis of the *Pāṇinīyaśikṣā* and the *Kāśika* of Nandikeśvara.¹³ Deshpande concludes that: “all ...factors, and especially the divine origins of Pāṇini’s grammar, are taken up by Nāgeśa and woven into a powerful argument to explain the status and the authority of the Sanskrit grammar.” According to him, the myth and the verse from NK about Naṭarāja revealing *sūtras* has come to be widely used by traditional grammarians from the time of Nāgeśa. However, the larger body of the text of NK seems to have remained outside the context of grammatical literature for it seemingly has little validity for grammar.

The connection of NK with Kashmiri Shaiva tradition shows more textual evidences. But these evidences are interpreted differently by researchers. Pandey points out to lines similar in NK with *Spandakārika*¹⁴ and with *Pratyabhijñā Hrdayam*.¹⁵ He suggests that the NK “...is the earliest voluntaristic philosophy, which was developed... by the thinkers of Kashmir ... in the light of monism.” He concludes about Kashmiri origins of the text as well as about Kashmir Shaivas like Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja drawing from NK. One can also find common with KSH terminology and notions such as *citkalā* (consciousness), being the supreme Lord and *aham* (absolute I).¹⁶ Yet, it could be Nandikeśvara echoing Kaśmiri texts and not vice-verse. Moreover, the text seems to be not known to Kashmir Shaivas. Rafaele Torella in his interview to Deshpande shared his impressions about later character of the text: “I don’t remember seeing any reference to Nandikeśvara’s *Kāśikā* in any Kashmir Shaiva texts (even where one might most have expected to find it, like the *Paratrimśikavivāraṇa* or *Tantraloka*, ch. III)... it is not an old text,.. but a late one which rather presupposes the doctrines of the so called ‘Kashmir Shaivism’ at a post-exegetical stage.” Therefore, taking into consideration a striking resemblance of NK with some verses from Kashmiri texts, it is more likely to conclude that NK was written after Abhinavagupta’s time, that is not before the eleventh century CE.

In his article, Deshpande argues that NK is a later text which could be composed in Tamil Nadu after 800 CE.¹⁷ In regard to Southern origins of the text and not Kashmirian, Deshpande points out that the first verse of NK mentions Naṭarāja, whose worship was not known in Kashmir, but was spread in Chidambaram region. Additionally, Upamanyu mentioned among sages not only Nandikeśvara but also Patañjali and Vyāghrapād, whose shrines are found in the yard of Naṭarāja’s temple in Chidambaram.¹⁸ The story of Patañjali and Vyāghrapād is as early as the earliest temple of Śiva in Chidambaram founded by Hiraṇyavarman of the early Pallava dynasty.¹⁹ So, Chidambaram seems to be the most possible place where the Naṭarāja-Pāṇini myth was developed.

Similar conclusions can be made from the paper by S. Palaniappan available on the Indology webpage.²⁰ On the basis of the Tamil literary tradition, Palaniappan adds that there are certain elements in Tamil mythology that could contribute to the myth of Pāṇini and Śiva. For example, a cult of Dakṣiṇamūrti of Madurai created a similar myth of Tamil grammar taught by Shiva to Agastya. Then a dance treatise *Tamil kuutta nUl* says that from one side of Śiva's drum, Sanskrit letters come and Tamil letters come from the other. Interestingly, the story of the Lord Nāṭeśa teaching Pāṇini fourteen *sūtras* was already known in the early Chola period of worship of the Lord Dakṣiṇamūrti, whose cult was supported by the Pandyan dynasty. There is a place of worship of the Lord Vyākaraṇadānaperumāl called Vyākaraṇasāna-mandapa, a place where Śiva is believed to have appeared before Pāṇini.²¹ Palaniappan says that the myth of Śiva-Pāṇini connection could serve as a political tool to support Shaiva rulers of Chidambaram in their political competition with Pandyan rulers of Madurai from 6th to 10th centuries. This is a very possible period when NK could be composed to increase the authority of Chidambaram with not less powerful religious figures, cults, and doctrines.

One more evidence of Nandikeśvara's connection to Chidambaram comes from the Shaiva Siddhanta tradition. Nandikeśvara is considered to be a legendary founder of some Shaiva Siddhanta schools. Tirumūlar, the author of *Tirumantiram* in the Tamil language where much of the Shaiva Siddhanta provisions have been formulated, is considered to be a direct disciple of Nandikeśvara. In his work, Tirumūlar names those who received Śiva's grace at Chidambaram. Among them are the four *kumāras* beginning with Sanaka, then Panañjali and Vyāghrapāda.²² Nandikeśvara also speaks of sages beginning with Sanaka who benefited from the *Śivasūtras* revealed by Nāṭarāja. Upamanyu extends this list to Panañjali and Vyāghrapāda. So, there is not only a claim of succession in lineage, but also the common mythology connected to the shrine of Nāṭarāja in Chidambaram which has been employed by the authors from this lineage. Goudriaan places Tirumular in the seventh century of CE, on the basis of evidences presented by Zvelebil.²³ This can lead to a conclusion that Nandikeśvara was either Tirumular's contemporary or lived before him. A further study of references to NK and its myths in Tamil sources as well as relations between Tamil Siddhas and Kashmir Pandits could reveal more details regarding origins and the role of this text.

***Māheśvarāni Sūtrāni* and their role in Nandikeśvarakāśikā: a tantric connection?**

An introduction to the *māheśvarāni sūtrāni* in the Pāṇinian system leads one quickly to a recognition and understanding that the unique clustering and arrangement of the Sanskrit letters has been designed here to serve a rather precise function. The Sanskrit syllabary, as we know, has been reorganised in these well-known *sūtras* and placed into discrete units, or groups, according to their phonetic characteristics. For example, we find that semivowels are placed together in one group, the nasalised letters are in another, aspirated are in yet another group, and so on. It is also quite well-known that these groupings carry the possibility for an efficient implementation of grammatical rules of Sanskrit as a language.

For example, in the Pāṇinian system, the grammatical rule 8.4.53 *jhalām jaśjhaśi* requires that voiced un-aspirated consonants (*jaś*) replace spirants (*jhal*) occurring before voiced consonants (*jhaś*). Here, *jaś jhal* and *jhaś* are *pratyahāras*, or compressed groups of letters. They are formed with the help of a final extra consonant which is a ‘terminal sign’, or a marker, called *anubandha*. These markers serve as a means of formation of a coding system expressed through phonetic keys called *pratyahāras*, or compressed groups of letters. For example, the four *sūtras* - *a i u ṇ ṛ ḷ k e o ṇ ai au c* - are abbreviated into one *pratyāhāra* ‘*ac*’ where ‘*a*’ is the initial vowel and ‘*c*’ is the final marker, and the whole *pratyāhāra* means ‘all vowels’. Similarly, ‘*jaś*’ would mean consonants *j b g ḍ d* where ‘*a*’ is added for pronunciation purposes and in order not to mix the letters with *anubandhas*.

In this way, instead of enumerating all the phonemes significant for grammatical operations, Pāṇini uses one short key-word. Then, the key-words are used to form grammatical rules and technical terms such as ‘*aj-anta*’ or ‘*hal-anta*’ (nominal stems ending in vowels or ending in consonants). So, in the grammatical context, the rearrangement of phonemes and the use of markers are highly valid for they serve to form meta-linguistic elements which contribute to efficiency and brevity of the grammatical text. Such a system of coding is rational and each symbol has a concrete semantic meaning.

An interesting feature of Nandikeśvarakāśikā as a text is how such a Pāṇinian grammatical-system of grouped letters has been linked here to a seemingly distinct system of the categories of cosmic emanation known - mostly in tantric cosmology - as *tattvas*. It is as if the author of this text believed that there was a kind of similarity and sympathetic resonance between these two quite different systems - one relating to core-rules of Sanskrit grammar as a language and the other to hidden grammatical ‘rules’ of cosmic manifestation. Both of these systems seem to involve the ability to distinguish specific groups or units - letters in one case and *tattvas*, or categories of creation, in the other - based on an inbuilt universal logic, or grammar, if you will. By means of such a ‘grammar’, both language and physical creation gain an internal consistency of laws, rules, and regulations from which they emerge and which are maintained through countless instances of their application in reality.

In several systems of tantric metaphysics, phonemic cosmology is an essential feature.²⁴ The phonemes are perceived as being alive, filled with power, and as sacred beings of some kind – deities, in fact. Traditionally, such a sacralization of Sanskrit phonemes is rooted in a concept of ‘sonic power’ (*vāc śakti*) wherein each letter of the alphabet is synchronized with a vibratory pattern of sound that articulates a particular aspect of reality into existence.²⁵ In this context of creative power, the phonemes acquire a very specific meaning which is not the same as linguistic, or semantic, meaning. The attribution of meaning to the Sanskrit alphabet there depends on religiously constructed representational power of sound. A reference point of each letter then, becomes a stage, or a station in the process of unfoldment of a hierarchical cosmos. Therefore, in order to explain and to understand the sacredness of phonemes and their meaning, each phoneme ought to be seen in a cosmological context. Each part of the Sanskrit alphabet here becomes more like a symbolic sign endowed with creative or destructive power and serves a cosmological function within the tantric paradigm.

Andre Padoux, who has written extensively on tantric cosmology and the concept of speech or ‘*vāc*’, describes the latter as a ‘creatix’ and “a symbol of

...Godhead... the force that creates, maintains, and upholds the universe.”²⁶ In his seminal work, ‘Vāc:... in selected Hindu Tantras’, Padoux shows how this concept of ‘vāc’ or ‘Word’ is expressed in tantric systems at two overlapping levels - as a cosmic manifestation and as a human act of speech:

All... developments of the Word... occur homologously within man or the cosmos... Thus... the creative act (is) an utterance which is a human act... reversing the order (we) see in this act nothing but the reproduction at the human level of an archetypal, divine act or process... the universe emerges within divine consciousness, through... stages or levels of speech... the categories... of the cosmic manifestation arise concurrently with the Sanskrit phonemes (*varṇa*) arranged in their grammatical order, while grammar – as well as traditional phonetics – will serve to account for the cosmology.²⁷

The Sanskrit phonemes, or *varṇas*, represent sound-elements which constitute the world of expressed objective forms (*vācya*) including all the basic elements and categories of creation from the *mahābhūtas* to the *tattvas* of human senses (*indriyas*) and inner mental organs (*antaḥkarana*). The grammatical units of speech, in this view, are transformed into symbols that express a functional cosmology. Such a tantric approach to the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet is somehow similar to mantras, especially *bija* mantras, which do not have semantic meaning and are called as non-linguistic, but which are meaningful because they serve the purpose of mapping and representing an emergent universe.

If we keep to this perspective, then it is logical that a text like the NK could find deeper correlations between the grammatology of the *Māheśvara sūtras* and their cosmological role as creative matrices of a manifesting universe. To articulate this deeper dimension and function of *Māheśvara sūtras* and to distinguish it from the purely grammatical level of language, Nandikeśvara says that *anubandhas* are for grammatical use only while the letters have deeper esoteric meanings beyond this.²⁸

Nandikeśvara’s unique methodology of this sacred dimension seems to be in a functional complementarity to the existing arrangement and grouping of the Sanskrit letters as we find them in the *Māheśvara sūtras*. A remarkable feature here is that the cosmological grammar of emanating levels of being – *tattvas* – appears altogether in concert with the linguistic component and its ‘grammar’. He emphasizes the importance of grouping of individual letters and syllables into units, or *sūtras*, where each element in a unit is inseparably related to the others. Here, a *sūtra*, as a composite of letters, represents a complete stage in the creation. This may be because the creative agencies – sounds or letters as deities – and the constituent elements of the universe emanating from them are envisioned to appear entirely in, and as, groups or units.

Both *sūtras* and the cosmological categories are found grouped in pairs, triads, in units of five and even in units of eight. Just as in the *sūtras*, where the letters in each group have common features, so also apparently do the *tattvas*. The relationships between the elements in one unit can be of different kinds but are always close and inseparable so that one cannot exist without the others. Within the groups of letters – especially at the level of vowel-units – there tends to be an inherent or inbuilt polarity of pairs between each creative agency, or deity. So, for example, the first group of letters – ‘*aiuṇ*’ – is presided over by Brahma who signifies the *a-kāra* principle which is formless and constitutive of pure awareness or pure knowledge (*jñānamātram, citkalā*). This ‘alpha’ deity is coupled with the next letter of the group – ‘*i*’ – that is female and signifies the pure energy of will or desire (*icchā śakti*). Their togetherness,

or androgyny, is expressed through the third letter of the group - *u-kāra* - which is expressed in the form of Viṣṇu, the ‘Pervader’.

This tendency to represent an inherent gender-based polarity within each group of letters and within their representative deity persists like a strain throughout the text and is repeated in different ways in each successive *sūtra*. Within the groups of letters, consisting of even more than two, we notice that this polarity of gender between letters may somehow be critical to the morphology of the cosmic creative process. Each created unit seems to have two aspects: a pure awareness factor, or cognitive factor, which tends to be masculine in nature and a corresponding dynamic movement towards proliferation, multiplicity, and objectivity that is somehow feminine.

Such repeated polarities indicate that both aspects are constitutive to the very order of creation. On the one hand, creation may be viewed in purely process terms, implying dynamic change and movement from a subtle state to increasingly gross and fragmented levels of being. On the other hand, the creative agency somehow exceeds and transcends the frontiers of the created world, and may be described as a "substance of substances", implying statism and inherent existence from its own side (*svabhāva*). Therefore, there is a polarity between two forms that a deity assumes: Brahma and Māyā, Puruṣa and Prakṛtī, Meśvara and Maheśvarī. These two poles have a strong tantric resonance and remind a play of creation through the exchange between Śiva and Śakti. These two aspects are always conjoined and explicitly recognised in the texts as inseparable from each other.

An even more interesting feature of NK is the element of causal relationship introduced in the text as a link between the two corresponding ‘grammars’ - of language and of cosmic manifestation through *tattvas*. We note that a kind of primacy seems to be given here to the former as effective cause, source, and origin, of the latter. The letters are somehow viewed as inherently potent and imbued with power - in fact, they possess creative agency (*karaṇatva*) to sound the entire world into being. As creators, or cosmic actors, the letters are in themselves full-fledged sacred deities with names like Brahma, Maheśvara and Viṣṇu. The letters represent or express the deities and their causal functions. In order to underline causative powers of the letters, Upamanyu, the commentator of Nandikeśvara, gives an example of the letter ‘*e*’ which purportedly derives from a combination of letters ‘*a*’ and ‘*i*’. According to his reading of the Nandikeśvara text, the letters in the very first *sūtra*, ‘have causative power to produce other letters’. Similarly, these first letters, known as Brahma and his power of will (*icchā śakti*), operate through distinct stages of manifestation of the cosmos originating the succeeding stages of enfoldment of the universe.

One must note at this point, that as we follow the text through its intricate patterns of sound, their deities, and the issuing cosmic *tattvas*, there persists a pattern of continuity between the two operative systems – of language with its core-rules of grammar and categories of cosmic emanation. Both share seeming similarities in activities, functions, or traits and are continuously interwoven with each other. One of the distinct ways to identify letters as deities or *tattvas* is to involve verbal or phonetic similarities between two systems. For example, the words *agra* (first) and *akṣara* (imperishable) traditionally characterise the Absolute, or Brahma. The word *agra* is also a characteristic of the letter ‘*a*’ and the word *akṣara* means ‘a letter’ in Sanskrit. Similarities in words characterising two entities here lead to identification of the letter ‘*a*’ with the Absolute. Even more interesting feature is establishing links based on similarity in one letter. As in case of the *sūtra* ‘*kapay*’, the letter ‘*pa*’ represents

puruṣa, or the letter ‘sa’ represents *sattva* in the *sūtra* ‘śaṣasar’. Here, it seems that the meaning of the word emerges from the initial syllable the word. Such attribution of meaning to sounds echoes traditional tantric views that constituent syllables or sounds of a word somehow possess lexical meaning which contributes to the meaning of the whole word.²⁹ By means of identification of syllables with words, it seems these syllables become identified with categories and things those words denote. Thus, connections between letters and words bring the alphabet into the realm of metaphysics.

To sum up, the *Māheśvara sūtras* in NK depart from its purely grammatical functions and appear to be a symbolic system with references which can be interpreted only through other texts. Passages similar to NK or with some dissimilarities or passages extending topics touched in this text are found in other tantric texts which reveal symbolism of each word employed in the NK. The association of letters with deities and their creative powers is a typical feature of tantric traditions based on the fundamental notion of the creative power of sound. However, through the text of Nandikeśvara itself, one can notice specific ways of reasoning to connect grammatical *sūtras* and tantric metaphysics. The author and his later commentator Upamanyu establish links by means of traditional methods, which basically employ similarities specifically found here between *sūtras* and cosmological models. The linking methods include verbal similarities and other similarities in features and functions such as grouping into units, polarisation, causality, or possibility of compression into *pratyahāras*. In this way, *Māheśvara sūtras* in particular and grammar in general are brought into the realm of sacred cosmology and represent cosmic creative powers. Such sacralization does not effect implementation of the *sūtras* in grammatical rules, but is supposed to reveal a metaphysical layer of the human sounds from advaitistic tantric perspective. A phoneme here is the underlying structure and animating power of both, the language and the universe. It represents that level where a sound generates not only words, but also what those words denote, or *tattvas* in our case. That is why grasp and understanding of creative powers of tantra as phonemes grouped into *sūtras*, reflecting upon it leads to elimination of seeming differentiations between part and whole, subject and object, word and meaning, signifier and signified, cause and effect and ultimately individual modality and its divine source.

Sources

The text of NK together with Upamanyu’s *ṭīka* (also called *Tattvavimarśinī*) presented here is based on two manuscripts of Nepalese provenance. The manuscripts are probably either copies of each other or they have one common source because they represent one version of the text with practically no discrepancies in readings as well as there are many shared errors. Collation with the published editions of NK by N. C. Vedantatirtha³⁰ and by K.S. Balasubramani³¹ has revealed that the Mss represent a distinct line of transmission of the text. Variant readings in the NK verses tend to prove that the Mss’s readings could exist in certain versions of the text. One of the deviations of the Nepalese manuscripts is that they include only fifteen verses out of twenty seven in the main text, but most of the other twelve verses appear as a part of the commentary. Practically all the verses have variant readings some of which occur uniquely only in the Mss. The manuscripts also depart from the editions in a way that the commentary is shorter and the sentences seem to be rearranged, omitted, or truncated. The titles of texts cited in

the Mss appear differently, or partially, or are missing altogether. These could indicate that the Mss belong to later stages of transmission based on the original, more complete text. Therefore, I used Vedantatirtha's version (V) as an aid to establish possibly original readings and adopt them in cases where both Mss have errors. I have not intended to produce a critical edition, but some editorial work was necessary to make the text coherent for further translation. The text of the Mss is clear and close enough to V to adapt some of its readings which possibly reflect earlier source Mss. I attempted to represent faithfully the Mss's version. Therefore, I preferred the Mss's readings unless they are unacceptable. Substantive corrections and emendations made on the basis of Vedantatirtha's version as well as variant readings in the NK verses have been documented in the footnotes.

Notes

- ¹ Kiparsky, 1994.
- ² Padoux, André, 1992, pg. 224.
- ³ Bhattacharya, J.N., pg. 947.
- ⁴ Dyczkowski, Mark, 1988, pg.108.
- ⁵ *Gandharvatantram* 1.9.
- ⁶ Banerji, 1992, pg. 85.
- ⁷ <http://saivaphilosophy.blogspot.de/2010/01/saiva-agamas.html>
- ⁸ *yenākṣrasamāmnāya adigamya maheśvarāt*
kṛtsnam vyākaraṇam proktam tasmai pāṇinaye namaḥ||
Deshpande, pg. 447; Cardona, 1976, pg. 179ff.
- ⁹ Pandey, Kahti Chandra, 1986, pp. 49, 50.
- ¹⁰ Deshpande, pg. 448. Haradatta is a South-Indian Śaiva scholar from Chola area. He wrote a commentary *Padamañjari* on *Kāśikāvṛtti* (The date is uncertain. According to Renou, 1940 pg. 29 Haradatta lived in the 13th century CE).
- ¹¹ Ibid. pg. 449a.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid, pg. 445.
- ¹⁴ *yasyonmeṣanimeṣābhyām jagataḥ pralayodayau* (*SpandaK* 3)
yasyonmeṣanimeṣābhyām vyaktāvyaktam idam jagat (*NK* 3)
- ¹⁵ *svecchayā svabhittau viśvam unmilayati* (*PratyabhijñāHr* 2)
svecchayā svasya cicchaktau viśvam unmilayaty asau (*NK* 12)
- ¹⁶ Padoux, André, 1992, pg. 225.
- ¹⁷ Deshpande, pg. 453.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. pg. 453.
- ¹⁹ Śivaramamurti, C. 1974, pp.74, 75.
- ²⁰ <http://indology.info/email/members/palaniappan/patanjali/>
- ²¹ Śivaramamurti, 1974, pp.74, 75.
- ²² <http://indology.info/email/members/palaniappan/patanjali/>
- ²³ Goudriaan, Teun, 1983, pg. 23. Zvelebil, Poets, pp. 18, 73.
- ²⁴ I can give an example of a few texts belonging to distinct tantric systems with emphasis on phonemic cosmologies like *Śāradātilaka tantram*, *Parātriśikavivaraṇa* of Abhinavagupta, or *Tantrasadbhāva* 3.67 where the phonic energy is expressed as *Kuṇḍalinī*.
- ²⁵ Padoux, André, 1992, pg. 49.
- ²⁶ Ibid., pg. X.
- ²⁷ Ibid., pg. XI.
- ²⁸ NK: *atra sarvatra sūtreṣu antyavarṇacaturdaśam*
dhātvarthaṁ samupādiṣṭaṁ pāṇinyādiṣṭasiddhaye||2||
Translation: Here in all the *sūtras*, the fourteen final letters are taught to achieve desired efficiency of Pāṇini's etc. [grammar] in [conveying] the meaning of *dhātus* (verbal roots).
- ²⁹ For example, in *Kulārṇava tantra* 7.7: *guṣabdas tv andhakāraḥ syāt ruṣabdas tan nirodhakaḥ*||

andhakāranirodhatvāt gurur ity abhidhīyate||

Translation: The syllable *gu* signifies darkness, *ru* - what restrains it. He who restrains darkness of ignorance is known as *guru*.

³⁰ Nandikeśvara-kāśikā: with the commentary of Upamanyu. Edited by Narendra Chandra Vedantatirtha. Calcutta: Metropolitan Printing & Publishing House, 1937.

³¹ Nandikeśvara-kāśikā: with the commentary of Upamanyu. Edited by K.S. Balasubramanian. Chennai: Kuppuswami Sastri Research Center, 2009.

Nandikeśvarakāśikā

śrīgaṇeśāya namaḥ¹||
namaḥ śivāya devāya sarvajñaparamātmāne²|
yasyonmeṣanimeṣābhyāṃ vyaktāvyaktam idaṃ jagat||1||
śrīgurum śrīkumāraṇ ca³ śaivatattvaviśāradaṃ|
praṇamya nandikeśādiśivabhaktān⁴ muhur muhuḥ||2||
kārikām⁵ ādisūtrāṇām⁶ nandikeśakṛtāṃ śubhām |
lokopakāriṇīm divyāṃ vyākaromi yathāmati||3||

Homage to Gaṇeśa!

1. Homage to Śiva, the God, the omniscient supreme Self by whose expansion and contraction (or opening and closing the eyes) this universe becomes manifest and unmanifest.

2,3. Repeatedly offering obeisances to the holy teacher who is proficient in *śaivatattva* (Śiva's true essence), to the holy Kumāras, and to the devotees of Śiva beginning with Nandikeśa, I am writing to the best of my understanding about an auspicious, helpful for the mankind, and wonderful explanation of the original aphorisms (*sūtras*) composed by Nandikeśa.

nṛttāvasāne⁷ naṭarājarāja nanāda dhakkāṃ navapañcavāram|
uddharttukāmaḥ sanakādisiddhān etad vimarśe śivasūtrajālam||1||

1. At the end of the dance, the king Naṭarāja sounded *dhakka* (or *damaru* - Śiva's two-sided drum) nine and five times. While explaining⁸ this net of *śiva-sūtras*, I (Nandikeśvara) wish to elevate⁹ Sanaka and the other realised beings (*siddhas*)¹⁰.

¹ A: śrīdugdhavināyakāya namaḥ ||

² V: sarvajñāya mahātmāne

³ V: gurum śivaṃ kumāraṇ ca

⁴ V: nandikeśādīn śivabhaktān

⁵ V: kāśikām

⁶ B: ādisūtrasya

⁷ V: nṛtyāvasāne

⁸ *vimarśe* (in the locative case, singular, masculine adverbial noun from *mṛś* 6P) literally means 'within discussion, examination, explanation'. The translation here is based on the gloss in the commentary "*vimarśe sphuṭīkaromi*" - *vimarśe* means 'I explain'. Also, the commentator explains that *vimarśe* here is for metrical purposes: *vimarśe iti chāndasaṃ bodhyam*.

⁹ *uddharttukāmaḥ* is considered to be of obscure origin. It is a *bhahuvrīhi samāsa* = *ud-hartum kāmaḥ yasya saḥ* (he, whose desire is to elevate) where 'm' of *tumun* affix in *hartum* is deleted according to *Kāśikāvṛtti* 6.1.144: *samastate vikalpena makāralopo vidhīyate| lumped avaśyamaḥ kṛtye tumkāmamamasor api|*

¹⁰ The four realised beings are four Kumāras, sons of Brahma born out of his mind - Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Sanatkumāra.

ihā sakalalokanāyakaḥ paramaśivaḥ **sanaka**-sanandana-sanatkumāra-¹¹-patañjali-
 vyāghrapāda-vasiṣṭhādīn **uddharttukāmo** ḍhakkāninādavyājena
 caturdaśasūtratattvam upadideśa| tadānu te munīndravaryāś cirakālam āśritānām
 asmākaṁ caturdaśasūtrātmakam tattvam upadidikṣuḥ iti| asya sūtrajālasya tattvārtham
 nandikeśo jānātīti taṁ praṇamya prṣṭavantas teṣāṁ caturdaśakārikārūpeṇa tattvam
 sūtrāṇām upadeṣṭum icchann idam ācakṣat|| **nṛttāvasāne**¹² iti | aham iti śeṣaḥ |
 naṭarājarāja ity anena maṅgalādīni darśitāni | **naṭarājarāja** iti viśvavilāsavaicitrya¹³-
 camatkārapravīṇatvāt| svātmatattvam vāgādyagocaram iti jñāpanārtham
 ḍhakkāninādavyājena sanakādīn uddharttukāmaḥ **navapañcavāraṁ** caturdaśavāraṁ
 svāntaragatam ātmatattvam prakāṣayitum ḍhakkāninādaṁ tad-¹⁴
 udbhūtavarnṇātmakam| **jālam** atirahasyam etat śivasūtrajālam **vimarśe** sphuṭikaromīty
 arthaḥ| tatrādyena sūtreṇa savarṇavaṇānām samastabhuvanānāṁ ca samudbhavam
 svātmatattvam upadiṣṭam||1|| **akāro brahmeti**| atra sarvatra sūtreṣu
 anyavarṇacaturdaśakam dhātvartham¹⁵ anyavarṇajālam śabda iti| tathoktam indreṇa||
 antyavarṇasamudbhūtā dhātavaḥ parikīrtitā iti|

Here, Paramaśiva (the supreme Lord), the ruler of the entire world taught the essence of the fourteen *sūtras* for elevation of [sages] Sanaka Sanandana Sanatkumāra Patañjali Vyāghrapāda Vasiṣṭha and others by artifice of striking the drum. After that, these chosen ones among great sages [thought]: “Among us who have taken refuge [in Paramaśiva], Nandikeśa wants to teach the truth contained in the fourteen *sūtras* for a long time [and] he knows the true meaning of his (Śiva’s) net of *sūtras*,” [so] offering obeisance they asked him [to teach]. Desiring to teach the essence of those *sūtras*, he explained it in the form of the fourteen verses. *nṛttāvasāne* (at termination of dance), *aham* (I) is to be supplied [to complete the sense], [and] *naṭarājarāja* (the king Naṭarāja) - these are words which show pure auspiciousness and alike. *naṭarājarāja* is [called so] because of [his] expertise in diverse [creative] pleasures of manifestation of the world. Since the essence of his own nature is an adobe of speech etc., so, in order to bring to light his own internal essential nature, [there came] a sound of the drum consisting of letters produced from that [sound]. The artifice of sounding the drum nine and five times, i.e. fourteen times, served to inform [and] emancipate Sanaka and others. *jalam* (net) means the most secret [thing], *etat* (this) indicates the net of *śivasūtras*, and *vimarśe* means ‘I give an explanation’. There (in this text), the origin and the essence of nature of homogeneous letters and all worlds are described by the first *sūtra*. The letter ‘a’ is Brahma. Here in all *sūtras*, the arrangement of other letters into fourteen [groups] has the purpose [to form] *dhātu* (grammatical roots). Another net of letters is a word. In this respect, it is said by Indra:¹⁶ “*dhātus* are proclaimed to be produced from other letters”.

¹¹ V: includes *nandikeśa* in the list.

¹² A,B: *nṛttāvasāna*

¹³ A,B: -vaicitya-

¹⁴ B: *tatad-*

¹⁵ This line resembles a part of verse 2 in V: अत्र सर्वत्र सूत्रेषु अन्त्यवर्णचतुर्दशम्।

धात्वर्थं समुपादिष्टं पाणिन्यादीष्टसिद्धये॥२॥

Translation: Here in all the *sūtras*, the fourteen final letters are taught to achieve desired efficiency of Pāṇini’s etc. [grammar] in [conveying] the meaning of *dhātus* (verbal roots).

¹⁶ Indra is possibly a grammarian mentioned in Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhyāyī.

**akāro brahmarūpaḥ syān nirguṇaḥ sarvavastuḥ||
citkalām iṃ¹⁷ samāśritya jagadrūpaḥ uṇ īśvaraḥ||2||¹⁸**

2. The letter ‘a’ is a form of Brahma devoid of qualities (*nirguṇa*) [present] in all things. Resorting to *citkalā* (an aspect of *cit*, or consciousness) [denoted by] ‘iṃ’, [he becomes] Īśvara, the Lord in the form of the universe, [denoted by] ‘uṇ’.

aḥ parameśvaraḥ iṃ māyām¹⁹ āśritya uḥ²⁰ vyāpakāḥ paraḥ āsīt| **a-brahma** ity atra asat
vā idam agra āsīt²¹ sa brahma agra akṣarātmaka āsīt| tato vai sad ajāyata²² | akṣarāt
sakalaguṇam āsīt ity arthaḥ| akṣarāṇām akāro asmīti ca²³
akāraḥ sarvavarṇāṅgryaḥ prakāśaḥ paramaḥ śivaḥ²⁴
ādyam antyena saṃyogād aham ity eva jāyate²⁵
ādir antyena saheteti ādir akāraḥ| antyo hakāraḥ| akārādhakārāntā varṇāḥ samabhavat|
sarvaṃ parātmakaṃ sarvajñasvamātram idam jagat|
jñāptyā garbhāvaśājātmā²⁶ madhyamā vāk samīritā²⁷|| itī²⁸

‘a’, or Parameśvara, resorting to ‘i’, or Māyā (power of delusion), became then an omnipresent ‘u’. Here, (the expression) ‘a - Brahma’ means that ‘in the beginning of this [creation], there was only *asat* (non-existence)’. That Brahma, imperishable²⁹ by

¹⁷ B: citkalābhiḥ; V: citkamām iṃ

¹⁸ Verse 3 in V.

¹⁹ *emend.* V: māyām; A,B: moghām. *moghām* (useless, false) is an adjective which has no noun to qualify in the sentence. It is possible that *māyām* was corrupted into *moghām* because य is often confused in the manuscripts with घ and मो differs from मा by one stroke only.

²⁰ *emend.* A,B: u

²¹ Taittiriya Upaniṣad 2.7.1

²² *emend.* A,B: sadājayatā

²³ Bhagavad Gīta 10.33

²⁴ V: parameśvaraḥ.

²⁵ Verse 4 in V. *pādas ab* occur in *Sanketapaddhati*.

²⁶ *emend.* garbhāvaśājātmā; V: virbhāvam āśāya; B: garbhāvam āśa[tm/?]ā; A: garbhāva[s/t]ājātmā

²⁷ A: tam īritā

²⁸ These lines resemble *pādas ab* and *d* in verse 5 and *pādas cd* in verse 6 of Nandikeśvara in V:

सर्वं परात्मकं पूर्वं ज्ञप्तिमात्रमिदं जगत्।

ज्ञप्तेर्बभूव पश्यन्ती मध्यमा वाक् ततः स्मृता॥५॥

वक्त्रे विशुद्धचक्राख्ये वैखरी सा मता ततः ।

सृष्ट्याविर्भावमासाद्य मध्यमा वाक् समा मता ॥६॥

Translation:

5. In the very beginning, this entire world was pure cognition consisting entirely of the *parā* (the highest) [level of speech]. The *paśyantī* (i.e. seeing speech) [level of speech] emerged from cognition [and] then became known as *madhyamā* (the middle) [level of] speech.

6. Then in the mouth, in *viśuddha cakṛa*, it (speech) is considered as *vaikharī*. Having come close to the state of manifestation, it is thought of as *madhyamā* [level of] speech.

²⁹ The words *agra* and *akṣara* refer to both Brahma and the letter ‘a’. Brahma is the first, or eldest (*agra*), among gods and he is an imperishable (*akṣara*) spirit. The letter ‘a’, in its turn, comes first

nature was in the beginning. Afterwards, *sat* (existence) emerged. It means that the immanent aspect³⁰ emerged from the imperishable (or transcendent). So also: “Among letters, I am the letter *a*”.

The letter ‘*a*’, the first among all other letters, is the light (*prakāśa*), the supreme Śiva. So, *aham* (I) is born from the union of the initial [letter ‘*a*’] with the last [letter ‘*ha*’].

[If we apply the rule] *ādir antyena sahetā*,³¹ then the first letter is ‘*a*’, the last letter is ‘*ha*’. The letters beginning with ‘*a*’ and ending with ‘*ha*’ appeared together.

This world is nothing but the omniscient self, the supreme self of all. By [the power] of cognition the unborn self free from birth [becomes] an uttered middle [level of] speech (*madhyamā vāk*).

sarvavastuṣu parāpaśyantīmadhyamāvaikhary³²-ādiṣu **iṃ citkalām āśrityety** atra gāyatrī ṭh tām padminīm iti| atra sūtre ikāras tu noktaḥ ikārasyaiva prakāṭitam³³| atra varṇasaṃbhavakāle aiurḥ| iti varṇapañcakam eva sarveṣāṃ ekonapañcāśadakṣarāṇāṃ bhūtapañcakānāṃ pañcavargāṇāṃ krameṇa yoniḥ| hrasvadīrghabhedāt dvividhokārasyaiva sarvasvatantratā| tathā ca uktam|
akāraṃ sannidhikṛtya jagatām kāraṇatvataḥ|
ikāraḥ sarvavarṇānāṃ śaktitvāt kāraṇam matam³⁴||
jagat sraṣṭum abhūd vāñchā³⁵ yadā hy āsīt tadābhavat|
kāmaḥ| jam iti prāhur munayo vedapāragāḥ||³⁶

sarvavastuṣu (in all existing things) means ‘at *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā*, and *vaikhari* levels of speech’. [The expression] *iṃ citkalām āśritya* (resorting to ‘*i*’ which is an aspect of consciousness) denotes here Gāyatrī [while] ‘*ṭh*’ [is identified with] her lotus. However, the letter ‘*i*’ is not mentioned here in the *sūtra*. There is only an evidence of the letter ‘*i*’. Here, when ‘*a*’, ‘*i*’, ‘*u*’, ‘*r*’, and ‘*l*’ were brought together, these five letters one by one became a source of five classes of consonants [each consisting] of five elements [in which] the entire alphabet of fifty one letters [is arranged]. There are two kinds of letter ‘*u*’ because [it is] subdivided into long and short [forms]. This is truly freedom of all [vowels]. And so it was said:

(*agra*) among the letters and it can be called *akṣara* as well as any other letter of the alphabet (for example, the alphabet is called *akṣrasamāmnāya* in the *Mahabhāṣya*). Since these alphabets came out of ‘Śiva himself, who is immortal, these *varṇas* are known as *akṣaras* (deathless). The *jaal* (net) that the Supreme God knitted is called *akṣaramala*.

³⁰ From that *akṣara*, imperishable Brahma or ‘*a*’ comes *sakalaguṇam*. It seems that *sakalaguṇam* can also be interpreted as referring to both, Brahma and the letter ‘*a*’: as qualities of the material, immanent world divided into parts or as phonetic characteristics of the Sanskrit vowels.

³¹ Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.1.71. The rule says that the initial item (*ādiḥ*) together with (*saha*) the last (*antyena*) marker (*iṭā*) denotes itself and all the items before ‘*iṭ*’, thus, constituting a siglum (*pratyahāra*). Here in case of *aham*, strictly speaking, the rule cannot be applied because ‘*ha*’ is not a marker, ‘*iṭ*’, or *anubandha*. *aham* is only a kind contraction of the entire alphabet in a manner similar to *pratyahāras*.

³² *emend.* A,B: vaikhayādiṣu

³³ *emend.* A,B: prakāṭitam

³⁴ V: gatam

³⁵ V: icchā

³⁶ These are verses 7 and 8 in V.

The letter ‘i’ in its proximity to the letter ‘a’ is understood as the cause of all letters due to its power [and] potentiality to be the cause of the worlds.

When there was a desire to manifest the world, then it happened so. The seers who mastered the Vedas called it ‘the seed of desire’.

uktaṃ ca|
svaprakāśaparamātmavastuno dṛśyamānajagaṭaḥ sisṛkṣayā|
kāmataḥ paraśivapraveśanaṃ³⁷ kāmabījam idam eva niścitam||
bindur³⁸ bindudvayārūḍhaḥ sārdayoni³⁹-svarūpikā⁴⁰|
mahākāmakalārūpam ātmānaṃ cintayet striye⁴¹||iti|
uḥ vyāpakatvenāsīd ity atra| ukāro viṣṇur ity āhur vyāpakatvān maheśvarīti||⁴²

It is also said:

The seed of desire is the entrance to the supreme Śiva because the desire to create visible worlds comes from the essence of the self-effulgent supreme Self. This indeed is quite certain.

Bindu (dot) developed into a double *bindu* assumes an image of half *yoni* (womb). Oh beloved, one should contemplate on the Self appearing as an aspect of the great desire.

Here, ‘uḥ’ appeared by the power of omnipresence. [They] say that the letter ‘u’ is Viṣṇu, [and it is] Maheśvarī due to its omnipresence.

ṛḷk sarve ḷ⁴³ māyākhyam vistāritacarācaram|
vṛttim āśritya cidrūpo janayāmāsa ca⁴⁴ balah⁴⁵||3||⁴⁶

3. ‘ṛḷk’ is everything. Engaged in the activity called Māyā, or ‘ḷ’, [the Lord who is] consciousness and power by nature produced (or gave birth to) the expanded world of movable and immovable.

³⁷ V: paraśivaprakāśitam

³⁸ V: bījam

³⁹ *emend.* A,B: sodvayeni-

⁴⁰ V: -svarūpakam

⁴¹ V: priye

⁴² Verse 9 in V: अकारो ज्ञप्तिमात्रं स्यादिकारश्चित्कला मता।

उकारो विष्णुरित्याहुर्व्यापकत्वान्महेश्वरः ॥९॥

Translation: The letter ‘a’ is pure cognition. The letter ‘i’ is known as an aspect of consciousness (*cit*). They say that the letter ‘u’ is Viṣṇu (and it is) Maheśvara due to its omnipresence (or pervasiveness).

⁴³ A: ṛḷk sarvai[sa/śa][ḷ/?]

⁴⁴ A,B: [va/ca/ba]. In the Mss A,B ‘va’ stands for both, ‘va’ and ‘ba’.

⁴⁵ A,B:[va/ca/ba]lah

⁴⁶ Verse 10 in V: ऋलक् सर्वेश्वरो मायां मनोवृत्तिमदर्शयत् ।

तामेव वृत्तिमाश्रित्य जगद्रूपमजीजनत् ॥१०॥

Translation: A group of letters ‘ṛ ḷ’ is Sarveśvara (the Lord of Everything, the Infinite Being) [who] showed Māyā, the activity of the mind. Assuming only that activity he brought into being the form of the universe.

nanu sarvavedānteṣu parameśvara eka niścitatvāt māyām āśritya jagadrūpo abhūd
ityukter advaitahāniḥ syād ity āśaṅkyāha| ṛḷk sarve⁴⁷ iti| ṛ parameśvaraḥ |
māyākhyām⁴⁸ manovṛttim āśritya idaṃ carācaram janayāmāsa| ṛtaṃ satyam param
brahmetyādi⁴⁹ ṛt param satyam ity arthaḥ|

vṛttivṛttimator atra bhedaśo na vidyate|
candracandrikayor yadvad vāgarthāḥ iva sundarīti⁵⁰||
mama vṛttimato rūpaṃ ḷkāraḥ parameśvarīti⁵¹
atra carācaram janayāmāsety uktam janyajanakabhāvāt| advaitahānir ity āśaṅkyāha||

However, he says in doubt: “Since all Vedānta schools maintain a strong position that Parameśvara is One, then being engaged in Māyā [he] assumed the form of the universe, which means destruction of non-duality”. So, *ṛḷk sarve* (‘*ṛḷk*’ is everything). ‘*ṛ*’ is Parameśvara. Being engaged in the mind activity called Māyā, or ‘*ḷ*’, [he] became an origin of this world of movable and immovable. “*ṛta* (settled order) is the truth, supreme Brahma etc.” confirms that ‘*ṛt*’ is the supreme truth.

There is no difference here between two functions, or activities (*vṛttimat*). Oh, beautiful lady, like the moon and the moon light so also are the word and its meaning.

The letter ‘*ḷ*’ is a form of my activity, the supreme Goddess Parameśvarī.

He says in doubt: “Here [in the verse], it is told that [he] produced the world of movable and immovable because there is a relationship of producer and produced (*janaya-janaka*), [but] this destroys non-duality.”

**eoṇ māheśvarāv⁵² aikyaṃ vijñānaṃ sarvavastuṣu⁵³
sākṣitvāt sarvabhūtānāṃ sa eka iti niścitam||4||⁵⁴**

4. ‘*eoṇ*’ is known as oneness of Maheśvara and Maheśvarī in all things. It is strongly maintained that he is One because he is the witness of all existing beings.

eoṇ iti| a-akṣaraḥ| i-māyāyuktaḥ san| u-jñānarūpaḥ prajñānātmā| sarvavastūnāṃ ekatvāt
advaitāpattiḥ na nānātvam janyajanakatvam ca svayaṃ praviśya tadrūpeṇa varttata ity
arthaḥ| vaṭabījanyāyena ceti pūrvasūtradvayajanitavarṇapañcakam eva sakala-⁵⁵

⁴⁷ *emend.* A,B: sarva

⁴⁸ *emend.* A,B: mākhyaṃ

⁴⁹ A quotation from *Narāyaṇa suktam*.

⁵⁰ In V, this is verse 11 where *pāda d* reads: *yathā vāgarthayor api*. Then the translation of the last two *pādas* would be: just as the moon and the moon light so also are the word and its meaning.

Verse 12 is not found in this recension: स्वेच्छया स्वस्य चिच्छत्तया विश्वमुन्मीलयत्यसौ।

वर्णानां मध्यमं क्लीबमृत्ववर्णद्वयं विदुः॥

Translation: He reveals the universe by the will [which is] his own power of consciousness. Among the letters these two letters are known as androgynous, placed in the middle.

⁵¹ In V, there is a quotation from *Śrītantra*: *matto hyabhūn manorūpaḥ ḷkāraḥ parameśvarī*

⁵² V: māyeśvarātmī. It means that the aphorism ‘*eoṇ*’ has the nature of Māyā and Maheśvara united together.

⁵³ *emend.* A,B: sarvavapha.

⁵⁴ Verse 13 in V.

⁵⁵ B: sakale-

-jagatkāraṇam iti proktaṃ| uttarasūtra⁵⁶-varṇānām api tasmād eva sambhavaḥ|
samaṣṭivyaṣṭi-⁵⁷bhedena pūrvavarṇadvitīyasya pūrvavarṇatṛtīyasya ca saṃyogam idaṃ
sūtraṃ| saṃbandham api ekatve cōktaṃ|

In regard to [the *sūtra*] ‘*eon*’: ‘*a*’ is imperishable, ‘*i*’ is united with Māyā [and] being so [it becomes] ‘*u*’ which has the form of knowledge, omniscient by nature. Oneness of all things [and] absence of multiplicity and relationships such as between creator and created lead to non-dualism. He himself having entered [the world] assumed its form. Just as a Banyan tree seed, so also a group of five letters appearing in first two *sūtras* become the cause [or the seed] of the entire universe [or universe with form], this was declared. The letters in the subsequent *sūtras* also originate from those [five letters]. This *sūtra* is an aggregate, or a conjunction (*saṃyoga*) of the third letter with the first and the second letter with the first through distinct relationship of the whole and a part (= *samaṣṭi-vyaṣṭi*). The connection (*saṃbandha*) was also said to exist in oneness.

śṛṇu tvam sāvadhānena caturṇām api sāmyatām⁵⁸
vedānām ca mahāvākyaṃ⁵⁹ catuṣkānām ihocyate||
brahmaśabdena yad vastu tat⁶⁰ prajñānam⁶¹ udīritam^{62|63}
tad brahma sarvasākṣitvān tat tvam asy⁶⁴ eva satyataḥ⁶⁵
anyatva cāraṇārthāya⁶⁶ ayam ātmety atharvaṇa^{67|4||} iti⁶⁸

Listen attentively about equality of all four Vedas. The great sayings [of Upaniṣads] consisting of four [statements] are spoken here in this world. Whatever is expressed by the word *Brahma*⁶⁹, it is said to be omniscience (or wisdom, or intelligence). *tat* (that) refers to *Brahma* because [he is] the witness of all, so *tat tvam asi* (you are that) is the only truth. The difference [of sayings] is for the purpose of distinction between Vedic schools. [The saying] ‘*ayam ātma...*’ (this Self...) belongs to the Atharva Veda.

⁵⁶ *emend.* A,B: uttaratra

⁵⁷ *emend.* A samīṣṭavyaṣṭi-; B samīṣṭamaṣṭi-

⁵⁸ V: sāmyatā

⁵⁹ V: mahābhāga

⁶⁰ V: tattva-

⁶¹ V: jñānam

⁶² V: itīritam

⁶³ The *pādas* *cd* in V: *prajñānam brahma yasmād dhi tasmād brahmāsmyaḥ tataḥ||*

⁶⁴ *emend.* A,B: nāssy

⁶⁵ V: tattvataḥ

⁶⁶ V: vāraṇatvāya

⁶⁷ V: etyapi varṇyate

⁶⁸ According to V, the verses are cited from *Sanakadakṣiṇāmūrti saṃvādamahāvākyaivivaraṇa*.

⁶⁹ The word *Brahma* occurs three times in four Upaniṣads’ great sayings: *prajñānam brahma* (Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.3 of the R̥gveda), *aham brahmāsmi* (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10 of the Yajurveda), *tat tvam asi* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7 of the Samaveda), *ayam ātmā brahma* (Mandukya Upaniṣad 1.2 of the Atharvaveda).

aiauc brahhma⁷⁰-rūpaḥ sa jagat⁷¹ svāntargataṁ tataḥ|
icchayā vistaraṁ kartum āvir āsīt kṛpānidhiḥ⁷²||5||

5. ‘ai-*auc*’ has the nature of Brahma who has the universe concealed within himself. Then, [he], an ocean of compassion, became manifest by [the power of] his own will to expand the world.

svātmabhūtasya parameśvarasya jagatkāraṇatvaṁ katham ity āśaṅkyāha| aiauc iti| tataḥ
svāntargataṁ jagat visphāritum icchuḥ ai jñānaśaktiyuta iti ataḥ pūrvasūtragata akāra-
ikāradīrghayogasyaiva ekāratvaṁ| atra saḥ prajñānasvarūpaparameśvaro yaḥ
pūrvasūtrāntaragatabhāvaḥ| uktam svaravimarśinyām| ukārajñānasamyogāt
sarvasambhūtiḥ⁷³ iṣyate⁷⁴ evaṁ tattvasamudāyānām dvādaśavarṇānām
śivādiprakṛtyantānām udbhavaḥ| prakṛtipuruṣavivekam uttaratra kapaysūtre
upasaṁhāratvena paṭhyate| atra hrasvadīrghaprabhedāt caturdaśasvarāṇām eva
kīrtanaṁ| caturdaśabhuvanacaturdaśacakracaturdaśaprakāraṇām iti niṣkarṣaḥ|

How can Parameśvara being within his own Self become a cause of the universe? - He says in doubt. [The reply is] ‘*aiauc*’. Then, desirous to shine forth (or manifest) the world concealed within himself (or unmanifest), [he becomes]) ‘*ai*’, a combination of knowledge and power. Therefore, the characteristics of sound ‘*e*’ are concealed in the first *sūtra*, [i.e. the sound ‘*e*’] is a combination of long sounds ‘*ā*’ and ‘*ī*’. Here, in the state of being within the first *sūtra*, he is the supreme Lord, consciousness by nature. It is said in the *Svaravimarśinī*: “The manifestation of everything is said to derive from the combination of the letter ‘*u*’ with knowledge.” In this way the assemblage of primary elements (*tattvas*), [or] twelve letters, beginning with *Śiva* and ending with *prakṛti* came into being. The distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is taught later in the *sūtra* ‘*kapay*’ by the ulterior statement. The number of the fourteen vowels only is [given] here due to division into short and long [forms]. This is the essence of the fourteen worlds, fourteen *cakras*, and fourteen classes.

atra śivagaurīsaṁvāde

tava mantre⁷⁵ maheśāni mama rūpaṁ⁷⁶ tvam eva hi|
caturdaśātmakam cakram tava cakram itīritam||
trayodaśātmakam turyam āvayor mantram ambike|
tac chūnyakāle⁷⁷ bindvātmā tasmād akṣarasambhavaḥ||
bindusphuṭana⁷⁸-mātreṇa varṇānām ca samudbhavaḥ|
tasmād ākāśamukhyāni bhūtāni samajāyata||
binduḥ srīcakrarājasya parabrahmātmakas⁷⁹ tv iti|

⁷⁰ *emend.* A,B: brahmaṇa. The verse is unmetrical in A,B.

⁷¹ V: san jagat

⁷² V: mahāmuniḥ. This is verse 14 in V.

⁷³ B: sarvabhūtiḥ

⁷⁴ The commentary in V contains a quotation from *Śvaravimarśinī*: *akārekārokaṇānām hrasvadīrghānām samyogāt sarvasambhūtiḥ iṣyate iti*

⁷⁵ V: mantram

⁷⁶ *emend.* A,B: rūpa

⁷⁷ V: ucchūnakāle

⁷⁸ V: bindusphuṭana-

caturdaśātmakam⁸⁰ paścāc cakrākāreṇa sambhavaḥ⁸¹ ||5||⁸² iti

Here is the dialogue between Śiva and Gaurī:

In your *mantra*, oh Maheśānī, you are indeed my form. The *cakra*, consisting of fourteen [parts] is proclaimed to be your *carka*.

Oh Ambikā, our mantra is the fourth state (*turya*) consisting of thirteen parts. At the time of dissolution, that [mantra] has the nature of *bindu* from which all the letters originate.

Also, the letters come into being by mere expansion of the *bindu* from which the primary elements such as space etc originated.

Bindu has the nature of the supreme Brahma (or the Absolute) of the royal *śrīcakra*. Afterwards, the fourteen [vowels] were originated from the letter ‘a’ in the *cakra*.

**bhūtapāñcakam etasmāt hayavaraḥ maheśvarāt||
vyomavāyambuvahnyākhyabhūtāny āsīt sa eva hi||6||⁸³**

6. A group of five elements which are ‘*ha-ya-va-raḥ*’ originated from that Maheśvara. He indeed became the elements called space, wind, water, and fire.

tata ātmanaḥ sakāśād ākāśādibhūtasambhavam⁸⁴ āha| **bhūtapāñcakam** iti| sa eva parameśvaraḥ|

hakārād vyomasambhūtiḥ⁸⁵ yakārād vāyur ucyate|
rakārād vahnis⁸⁶ toyaṃ tu vakārād iti śaivavāk||⁸⁷

tasmād ātmanaḥ ākāśaḥ sambhūta iti| tasmāt parameśvarād bhūtapāñcakātmakam ākāśādikaṃ prapañcakāraṇam āsīt| atrāsmiṃ sūtre bhūtapāñcakam āsīt iti uktam||6||
ākāśāḍi bhūtacatuṣṭayam evoktam| na pṛthivī ākāṅkṣāyām| yadādhārasvarūpaṃ samastakāraṇam iti sūtrāntareṇāvocat|

Thereafter, he says that the elements beginning with space originated from the presence of Self. In regard to *bhūtapāñcakam* (a group of five elements): *sa eva* (only he) means Parameśvara.

According to *śaivas*’ speech (*vāk*), the manifestation of the space element (*vyoma*) comes from the letter ‘*ha*’, from ‘*ya*’, wind is said to derive, fire derives from ‘*ra*’, water derives from ‘*va*’.

Space (*ākāśa*) originated from that Self. The cause of further expansion comprised of five elements beginning with space [comes] from that Parameśvara. In this sutra, it is said that he became a group of five elements. (6) [However,] only a

⁷⁹ *emend.* A,B: parabrahmātmakam

⁸⁰ V: caturdaśātmakaḥ

⁸¹ *emend.* A,B: sambhava

⁸² This is a quotation from *Śivagaurīsaṃvāda Mahāmantratattvaparakāśinī*.

⁸³ This is verse 15 in V.

⁸⁴ B: sakāśādibhūte sambhavam

⁸⁵ V: vyomasamjñam ca

⁸⁶ *emend.* A,B: vahni

⁸⁷ V: śaiva vāk. This is verse 16 in V.

group of four elements beginning with space was mentioned. There is no earth element to complete the sense. He told in the *sūtra*, that the cause of everything is [something] which has the nature of support.

**ādhārabhūtaṃ bhūtānām annādīnām ca kāraṇam||
annād retas tato jīvaḥ kāraṇatvāl laṇīritam||7||⁸⁸**

7. [‘*laṇī*’] is the element of support, the cause of food etc., and living beings. Semen derives from food. From that [semen], a living being [is born]. ‘*laṇī*’ was proclaimed due to its causative force.

**ādhārabhūtam iti| bhūtānām prāṇijātānām⁸⁹ udbhijjādīnām⁹⁰ pradhānādhārabhūtatvāt
pṛthvī punaś cānnapānādīnām kāraṇatvāt|| pratyekatvena laṇītyādīritam ity arthaḥ||7||**

ādhārabhūtam (the element of support) is used in the sense of earth because [this is] a primary element of support of what exists (*bhūtānām*), or living beings born from seeds etc., and also, because [the earth is] the cause of food, drinks etc.. This is the reason to deal with ‘*laṇī*’ and so forth singly. (7)

**śabdasparśau rūparasagandhās ca ṇamaṇaṇanam|
vyomādīnām guṇādīnī⁹¹ jānīyāt sarvavastuṣu||8||⁹²**

8. Sound and touch, form, taste, and smell are ‘*ṇa-ma-ṇa-ṇa-nam*’.

One should know peculiar qualities of [elements] beginning with air etc. in all things.

**tataḥ pṛthivyādīnām kāraṇatve sthitānām tanmātrāṇām samutpattikramam āha|
śabdasparśāv iti tantroktenoddhātitaṃ| anyatra bījanirṇayabhedā bahavaḥ santi|
pañcavargeṣv antimārṇā śabdasparśādayo guṇā iti vākyānīti||8||**

Thereafter, he says about a succession of manifestation of established subtle elements (*tanmātras*) as the cause of earth etc. [The word] *śabdasparśāv* (sound and touch) [is explained] according to a selected [passage] from the *tantras*. There are many divergences of opinions regarding *bīja* (seed) elsewhere. There are statements that the qualities beginning with sound and touch are the final letters of five series (*vargas*) of consonants.

**jha-bhañ asau virāḍrūpacidātmanah sarvajantuṣu vijñeyam⁹³|
sthāvarāḍau na vākyāni vargāṇām turyavarṇayoḥ||9||⁹⁴**

⁸⁸ This is verse 17 in V.

⁸⁹ A: prāṇijātīnām

⁹⁰ *emend.* A: udbhijjādīnī; B: udbhijjādīni

⁹¹ V: guṇā hyete

⁹² Verse 18 in V.

⁹³ A: vijñāyam

⁹⁴ The verse seems to be corrupted because the first line is unmetrical and the verse does not mention any *tattvas* corresponding to the letters. The whole verse resembles verse 19 in V:

9. ‘*jha-bhañ*’ should be recognised in all living beings as [him who] has the nature of consciousness in the form of the supreme intellect (*virāja*). There are no [such] statements in regard to inanimate [objects] and so on.

jhabhañ iti| virāḍrūpaśivasya prāṇijātasya jhakārabhakārau⁹⁵ sthāvarādiṣu vinā vijñeyāv ity arthaḥ||9|| atha kramaprāptapādādikam āha|

The meaning of ‘*jha-bhañ*’ is that the letters ‘*jha*’ and ‘*bha*’ should be recognised as belonging to Śiva in the form of the supreme intellect of living beings, excluding inanimate objects. (9) Now he says in successive order about [action faculties] beginning with the foot.

ghaḍhadhaṣ sarvabhūtānām pādapāyū upasthakaḥ|
karmendriyagaṇā hy ete jātā hi paramātmanah||10||⁹⁶

10. ‘*gha-ḍha-dhaṣ*’ are the organ of locomotion, the excretory organ, and the organ of reproduction of all the creatures. These groups of action faculties are brought into existence by the supreme Self.

ghaḍhadhaṣ iti| paramātmanah śivasakāśāt ime karmendriyagaṇāḥ pādapāyūpasthā ghaḍhadhavarṇā jātā ity arthaḥ||10||⁹⁷

The meaning of ‘*gha-ḍha-dhaṣ*’ is that these groups of action faculties [such as] organs of locomotion, the excretory organs, and the organs of reproduction are letters ‘*gha-ḍha-dhaṣ*’ brought into existence by the supreme Self, or derive from Śiva. (10)

śrotratvañnayanaghrāṇajihvādhīndriyapañcakam|
sarveśām api jantūnām īritam jabagaḍadaś||11||⁹⁸ iti

11. ‘*ja-ba-ga-ḍa-daś*’, also proclaimed to belong to all living beings, are five senses: ear, skin, eye, nose, and tongue.

śrotratvag iti| varṇānām ca madhyavargesthā jñānendriyajanakam iti vijñeyam ity arthaḥ||11|| tataḥ prāṇādipañcakamanobuddhyahaṅkāraḥ samunmīlyante||

वाक्याणी च ह्यभजासीद्विराड्पं चिदात्मनः।

सर्वजन्तुषु विज्ञेयं स्थावरादौ न विद्यते ।

वर्गाणां तुर्यवर्णा ये कर्मेन्द्रियमया हि ते॥११॥

Translation: Also, ‘*jha-bhañ*’ are speech and hand of [him who] has nature of consciousness in the form of the supreme intellect (*virāja*). He should be known in all living beings except immovable (or inanimate things) etc. The forth syllables in the series of consonants are composed of faculties of action.

⁹⁵ *emend.* A,B: jakārabakārau

⁹⁶ Verse 20 in V.

⁹⁷ A,B: kramaprāptapādādikam āha| The expression in the Mss seems to be a scribal error. It is out of place and the same phrase occurs just before verse 10.

⁹⁸ Verse 21 in V.

śrotravag (ear, skin) also means that among the letters, [the syllables *ja-ba-ga-da-da*] occupy the middle position in [their respective] series of consonants [and they] should be known as generating cognitive faculties. (11) Thereafter, mind, intellect, limited egoity, and a group of five beginning with the vital air (*prāṇa*) are disclosed.

**prāṇādipaṇcakam caiva mano buddhir ahaṁkṛtiḥ|
babhūvuḥ⁹⁹ kāraṇatvena khaphachaṭhathacaṭatav||12||¹⁰⁰**

12. ‘*kha-pha-cha-ṭha-tha-ca-ṭa-tav*’ became by the force of causality a group of five [elements] beginning with the vital air (*prāṇa*) as well as mind, intellect, and limited egoity.

**prāṇādipaṇcakam iti|
vargadvitīyavarṇotthaḥ prāṇādyāḥ pañcavāyavaḥ|
ādyā¹⁰¹-vargātrayāj jātā antaḥkaraṇavṛttaya||¹⁰² iti
anyadvayasamudbhūtau puruṣaprakṛtiḥ ca|
etair aṣṭavarṇaiḥ prāṇādipaṇcakam manobuddhyahāṅkāś ca jagatām kāraṇatve
saṁbhūtā ity arthaḥ||12||**

The meaning of *prāṇādipaṇcakam* (a group of five beginning with the vital air) is [as follows]:

The letters in the second position in the series of consonants are five winds beginning with *prāṇa*. The activities of the inner instruments (*antaḥkaraṇa*) emerge from the initial [letters] of three series of consonants. Moreover, the qualities of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* originated from the other two [series of consonants].

It means that a group of five vital airs beginning with *prāṇa* plus mind, intellect, and limited egoity came into existence through these eight letters being the cause of the worlds. (12)

**prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva sarveṣāṁ eva sammatam|
saṁbhūtam iti vijñeyaṁ kapay syād ity ahoditam¹⁰³||13||**

13. Surely he says that ‘*ka-pay*’ is to be known as a combination [of procreative principles which] are truly regarded by everyone just as *prakṛti* (nature) and *puruṣa* (primordial being).

tataḥ sarvapṛāṇikāraṇatve ādyantavarga¹⁰⁴-dvayādyakṣaragrahatve samputībhāvaḥ
prakṛtipuruṣābhyām prakāśayati|| **prakṛtiṁ** iti| kakārapakārajātau prakṛtipuruṣāv ity
arthaḥ||13|| tato’vasthātrayaṁ nirūpayati sattvaṁ rajas tama iti||

⁹⁹ V: babhuva

¹⁰⁰ Verse 22 in V.

¹⁰¹ V: madhya-

¹⁰² Verse 23 in V.

¹⁰³ V: niścitam. This verse is 24 in V.

¹⁰⁴ *emend.* A,B: ādyantavarṇa-

Thereafter, the existing space between two hemispheres [made of] *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* illuminates being the cause of all living beings when initial letters of the first and the last series of consonants are taken together. [The verse beginning with] *prakṛtim* means that both classes of the letters ‘ka’ and ‘pa’ are *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. (13) Thereafter, he describes three states which are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*.

**sattvaṃ rajas tama iti guṇānāṃ tritayaṃ purāḥ
samāśritya mahādevaḥ śaśasar krīḍati prabhuh||14||¹⁰⁵**

14. The great God (*Mahādeva*) assuming in the beginning a triad of qualities (*guṇas*) *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (activity), and *tamas* (inertia) ‘śa-śa-sar’ the mighty one plays.

**purā sṛṣṭeḥ prāk śaśasavarṇasambhūtasattvarajastamoguṇān āśritya paramaśivaḥ
sarvabhūteṣu krīḍatīty arthaḥ|
śakārād rajasotpannaḥ¹⁰⁶ śakārāt tāmasodbhavaḥ|
śakārāt sattvasambhūtir iti triguṇasambhavaḥ||¹⁰⁷
sarvatattvajanakāḥ tattvātītajñāpanārthaṃ sūtram etac cakāra iti||14||**

This means that *purā* (in the beginning), or before the emanation, the supreme Śiva (*Paramaśiva*) assuming qualities of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* produced from ‘śa-śa-sa’ plays in all living beings.

rajas arises from the letter ‘śa’, the quality of *tāmas* derives from the letter ‘śa’, *sattva* is produced from the letter ‘sa’. Thus, three qualities came into existence.

The progenitor of all constituent categories made this *sūtra* with the purpose of making known the supreme category.

**tattvātītaḥ paraḥ sākṣī sarvānugrahavigrahaḥ|
aham ātmā paro hal syād iti śambhus tirodadhe||15||¹⁰⁸
iti śrīmat sarvalokopakārinandikeśaracitā kāśikā samāptāḥ||16||**

15. “I am Self, a supreme witness beyond the categories of existence, the form of complete grace, the final (or supreme) *hal*” - saying thus Śambhu disappeared.

16. Thus ends the commentary composed by Nandikeśa, a saviour of the whole world.

**sarvānugrahavigrahaḥ sākṣī tattvātītaḥ hal syād iti ḍhakkāninādavyājena sarveṣāṃ
munijanānāṃ tattvaṃ upadiśan tirodadhe¹⁰⁹ ity arthaḥ||15|| ity ādinandikeśvarakṛta
sūtravimarśinī samāptāḥ|
kāśikāyāḥ ṭikāsamāptāḥ || śubham|| śivadattena likhitam svārthaṃ|| śubham astu||¹¹⁰**

¹⁰⁵ Verse 25 in V.

¹⁰⁶ *emend.* V: rajasobhūtiḥ; A: raja utpanna; B: rūja utpannaḥ.

¹⁰⁷ Verse 26 in V.

¹⁰⁸ Verse 27 in V.

¹⁰⁹ *emend.* A,B: stirodadhe.

¹¹⁰ This line is not found in B.

The meaning is that having taught the truth - '*hal*' is the form of complete grace, a witness beyond the categories of existence - to all the saints by the artifice of sounding the drum, he disappeared. (15) Deliberations on the *sūtras* composed by Nandikeśvara are completed. The notes on the commentary are finished. [Be] auspicious! Written by Śivadatta [to express] the original meaning. Be auspicious!

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